

## Reading DOK Definitions

### General Guidelines for Assigning DOK:

- The DOK definitions can be applied to reading standards, tasks, or activities.
- Consider the complexity of the reading demands, not the difficulty for students.
- Consider the experience (prior knowledge) and grade-level expectations of a typical student.
- Do not rely on verbs (describe, explain, evaluate, etc.). Instead, consider the content complexity required for an adequate response.
- For multiple-choice assessment items, consider the item as a whole—including distractors—to judge complexity.
- An expectation or item that is confusing due to error or wording does not reflect increased content complexity—it simply means the statement needs revisions.
- The reading DOK levels were originally based on Valencia and Wixson (2000, pp. 909-935).

### DOK 1

---

DOK 1 involves reading text orally and with basic comprehension, decoding words, blending phonemes, receiving and reciting facts, demonstrating letter and word knowledge, and recognizing text features and common spelling patterns. DOK 1 also includes receiving or reciting facts acquired by processing text as well as reading orally without the analysis of text. Very basic comprehension of a text gained from knowledge of vocabulary and explicit structure of the text is at this category. Tasks require only a shallow understanding of the text presented and often consist of verbatim recall from text, slight paraphrasing of specific details from the text, or simple understanding of a single word or phrase. Younger students who answer direct questions about features stated explicitly in the text are performing at this category. Applying phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words are also DOK 1 tasks. Some examples that represent, but do not constitute all of, DOK 1 performance are:

- Support ideas with reference to verbatim (or only slightly paraphrased) details from the text.
- Use a dictionary to find the meanings of words.
- Recognize figurative language in a reading passage

## DOK 2

---

DOK 2 involves drawing meaning from text by using organizational structure, evidence, and context; summarizing main ideas, character traits, plots, themes, and figurative use of words; following cause-effect sequences and multiple ideas through a text; distinguishing among hypotheses and givens as well as fact from opinion; and explaining differences among genres (poetry, expository materials, fiction, etc.). DOK 2 requires the engagement of some mental processing beyond recalling or reproducing a response; it requires both comprehension and subsequent processing of text or portions of text. Inter-sentence analysis or inference is required. DOK 2 tasks may require use of specific information from the text to explain given events and ideas. At this level, reading concepts (e.g. making inferences or predictions) are generally applied for purposeful reading. Multiple features of the text are processed to gain a deeper understanding of the text such as organizing in a time sequence, outlining, comparing fact from opinion, and using graphic aides. Deciphering main ideas supported by key details or drawing on details to describe a feature in a story are stressed. Younger students conveying important points from a story fit under this category. DOK 2 ideas, in general, apply the skills and concepts that constitute DOK 1. However, DOK 2 activities involve closer understanding of text, possibly through paraphrasing, such as putting in one's own words both the question and response to an assessment item. Some examples that represent, but do not constitute all of, DOK 2 performance include:

---

- Use context cues to identify the meaning of unfamiliar words, phrases, and expressions that could otherwise have multiple meanings.
- Predict a logical outcome based on information in a reading selection.
- Identify and summarize the major events in a narrative.

## **DOK 3**

---

DOK 3 involves conducting analyses of the text to make inferences on author's purpose and use of textual features (e.g. literary devices to support and convey the main message); engaging in critical reading to attest to the credibility of the message, the internal logic, and implied values, attitudes, and biases; and going beyond the text by comparing features and meaning with other texts, considering the impact of the time period and other conditions when the text was written, and raising valid alternative hypotheses and conclusions to those presented in the text. At DOK 3 deep knowledge becomes a greater focus. Students are encouraged to go beyond the text; however, they are still required to show understanding of the ideas in the text. Students may be encouraged to explain, generalize, or connect ideas while applying reasoning and planning. Students must be able to support their thinking. Younger students who provide some valid evidence for their breakdown of a story into meaningful parts are performing at this category. Tasks at a Category 3 may involve abstract theme identification, inference across an entire passage with multiple paragraphs, or students' application of prior knowledge. Activities may also involve identifying more abstract connections between texts. Some examples that represent, but do not constitute all of, DOK 3 performance include:

- Explain or recognize how the author's purpose affects the interpretation of a reading selection.
- Summarize information from multiple sources to address a specific topic.
- Analyze and describe the characteristics of various types of literature.

## DOK 4

---

DOK 4 involves at least as complex content as in the previous category, but also requires working on a task over an extended period of time such as when conducting a research project over weeks. The extended time that accompanies this type of activity allows for creation of original work and requires metacognitive awareness that typically increases the complexity of a DOK 4 task overall, in comparison with DOK 3 activities. The extended time period is not a distinguishing factor if the required work is only repetitive and does not require the application of significant conceptual understanding and higher-order thinking.

DOK 4 activities may have students take information from multiple passages and texts to find supporting evidence and counter points for developing an argument or reaching conclusions or could involve creating an original thesis on a topic based on information drawn from relevant references. For younger students, an extended period of time could be multiple days for reaching conclusions from reading a number of texts. Students take information from a multiple of passages and are asked to apply this information to a new task. They may also be asked to develop hypotheses and perform complex analyses of the connections among texts requiring work over an extended period of time. Some examples that represent, but do not constitute all of, DOK 4 performance are:

- Analyze and synthesize information from multiple sources.
- Examine and explain alternative perspectives across a variety of sources.
- Describe and illustrate how common themes are found across texts from different cultures.

Webb, N. L. *Alignment study in language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies of state standards and assessments for four states*. A study of the State Collaborative on Assessment & Student Standards (SCASS) Technical Issues in Large-Scale Assessment (TILSA). Washington, D. C.: Council of Chief State School Officers, December 2002. Revised in 2014 by Norman Webb and Sara Christopherson.